What are the Benefits of Quitting Smoking?

(American Lung Association)

When smokers quit, within twenty minutes of smoking that last cigarette the body begins a series of changes.

At 20 minutes after quitting:
- blood pressure decreases
- pulse rate drops
- body temperature of hands and feet increases

At 8 hours:
- carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- oxygen level in blood increases to normal

At 24 hours:
- chance of a heart attack decreases

At 48 hours:
- nerve endings start regrowing
- ability to smell and taste is enhanced

The first year after quitting:

At 2 weeks to 3 months:
- circulation improves
- walking becomes easier
- lung function increases

1 to 9 months:
- coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

1 year:
- excess risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smoker

Long-term Benefits of Quitting:

At 5 years:
- from 5 to 15 years after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of people who have never smoked.

At 10 years:
- risk of lung cancer drops to as little as one-half that of continuing smokers
- risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases
- risk of ulcer decreases

At 15 years:
- risk of coronary heart disease is now similar to that of people who have never smoked
- risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who have never smoked
Health Risks:

- Increased risk of dying prematurely due to smoking attributable diseases
  - lung cancer
  - other cancers (i.e., cancer of the liver, pancreas, kidney, larynx, esophagus, colorectal, cervical)

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Reduced lung function
- Menstrual function
- Reproductive function
- Bone density and fracture risk